

IMPROVED SET TOP BOX AND METHODS FOR USING THE SAMEABSTRACT

Devices, computer program products, and methods  
5 are provided which extend the features of a set top box.  
In a first aspect, a method is provided for employing a set  
top box to notify at least one person of a television  
event. In accordance with the method, a start time of a  
television event is determined, and a set top box is  
10 employed to notify at least one person via a telephone line  
when a current time is within a predetermined time of the  
start time. In a second aspect, a method is provided for  
employing a set top box to record a telephone message. In  
accordance with the method, a telephone message received  
15 via a telephone line coupled to a set top box is recorded  
by employing the set top box, and at least an indicator of  
the recorded telephone message is displayed. In a third  
aspect, a method is provided for controlling a set top box  
via a telephone line coupled to the set top box. In  
20 accordance with the method, a telephone call is received  
from a calling party via a telephone line coupled to a set  
top box, and the set top box is controlled via at least one  
command transmitted by the calling party to the set top box  
during the telephone call. In other aspects, devices and  
25 computer program products are provided that can perform the  
above described methods.